

Summary

Kulturoznawstwo, the holistic study of humanities, developed in Poland and emerged from two traditions: the German concept of *Kulturwissenschaft* and Old Greek philology. In the mid 1970s the study began to assimilate the British tradition of social anthropology and American cultural anthropology. In this way the study of culture in Poland became a kind of eclectic umbrella spread over the arts and humanities. Ironically, *kulturoznawstwo* did not have the formal status of an academic discipline. This meant that students of *kulturoznawstwo* could not achieve the degree of a doctorate.

The development of teaching *kulturoznawstwo* in Poland was partly discontinued during the communist period of Poland's history. Both the censorship and Marxist-Leninist ideology blocked academic contacts with non-Marxist intellectual tradition and scientific achievements. Both structuralism and postmodernism started to be taught at Polish universities much later than at their Western counterparts.

Fortunately, communism in Poland collapsed in 1989 and censorship was lifted. The way to academic exchange opened. In consequence translations to Polish language of books and articles on the newest trends and concepts in humanities started to fill the intellectual gap caused by the domination of Marxist ideology. In 2005 *kulturoznawstwo* was given the status of a formal academic discipline. Both events and the growing interest of students in studies of culture produced a need to find a clearer definition of *kulturoznawstwo*. This was the stimulus which prompted the Jagiellonian University Chair of Theory and History of Cultural Studies and the Department of Semiotics and Sociology to organize a conference on *Tożsamość kulturoznawstwa* (Identity of Studies of Culture). The conference was held at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków on October 18 and 19, 2007.

The present volume consists of a selection of papers delivered for the conference. They are divided into three parts. The first part is devoted to the problems of theory and methodology. The second unit focuses on the core of the conference: identity of studies of culture. The third part turns to empirical studies. In general the book is the first and, the editors hope, faithful picture of the current state of trends and tendencies in Polish *kulturoznawstwo*.

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